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CHANGING CONTEXTS OF REVOLUTION IN LATIN AMERICA

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SUMMARY

The political origins of Cuban-type revolutionary pressures in Latin America are traced to the frustrations and divisions within the popular, Aprista-type parties during the mid-1950s. The failure of democratic experimentation after 1945 led to the radicalization of youthful segments of these parties and to a revived nationalist revolutionary militancy which expressed itself in anti-imperialist, anti-American terms. The consummation of this latent division among Latin American revolutionary groups after 1959, together with other changes in the internal and international political contexts, many of which are directly related to the development of the Cuban Revolution, render repetition or extension of the Cuban experience elsewhere in Latin America improbable despite the continued prevalence of violence and underdevelopment.

CHANGING CONTEXTS OF REVOLUTION IN LATIN AMERICA

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I. REVOLUTION AND VIOLENCE

Since the Cuban Revolution thrust itself, and with it Latin America, upon American consciousness in 1959, there has been a great deal of speculation about revolution in Latin America. Some of the very factors which had induced early American neglect and complacency about the area--the closeness to home (more apparent than real in the case of South America); the seemingly endless succession of comic, sometimes cruel, but always inefficient governments; the picturesqueness of millennial poverty--took on in the light of the successful revolution led by Fidel Castro an ominous appearance of impending collapse, of hungry indian peasants brandishing machetes and spreading Communist power on our doorstep.

Observers differed over precisely how this would happen. Some had their doubts about the extent to which starving indians could be mobilized, or about the ease with which, once mobilized, they would fit into the world Communist system, or about what we had to do with

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it all. But if it would not be the peasants to rise, then it would be the urban slumdweller, or the students and intellectuals, or the modernizing middle classes. Much debate was expended on the social ingredients of the revolution in Cuba, and on whether it would be the same groups or others that would make the revolution in Latin America.

The Cuban Revolution is now in its eighth year. The nineteen remaining countries of Latin America still occupy the same geographic relationship to the United States, and, with few exceptions, have made little progress toward political or social democracy, the elimination of violence, or the higher living standards presumed necessary to avoid repetitions of the Cuban experience. Yet the Andes have not become another Sierra Maestra, and the isolated attempts to make them one have met with dismal failure. Not a single Latin American country has gone the way of Cuba.

Why has the Cuban example, which aroused such expectations, not been emulated elsewhere? This is not, admittedly, the kind of question to which it is possible to provide any easy or definitive answers. We have no way of turning the clock back to any of the innumerable potentially pivotal events of the past seven years to determine what would have happened if that event had been different. If Goulart had not undercut his military supporters and been overthrown; if the Peruvian Army's crack Rangers had not gone into action at the first sign of guerrilla activity; if the United States Marines had not landed in the Dominican Republic; if there had

been no Alliance for Progress.... The "ifs" are interminable: within certain broad limits, each of us is entitled to his own list according to his analysis and his values.

Nevertheless, the question "Why has the Cuban Revolution failed to spread elsewhere in Latin America?" is relevant because speculations, assumptions, and convictions about the answer underlie much, perhaps too much, contemporary political activity and public policy in Latin America, and because even a discussion, such as that provided in this paper, of some of the issues involved may help to clarify somewhat the nature of revolutionary pressures in Latin America.

If we take the Cuban Revolution to mean a type of social revolution involving the authoritarian imposition of substantial changes in political, social and economic relations in society, then a historical answer suggests itself at once. Though violence of various types involving changes in government personnel has been frequent in Latin America, social revolutions have been very rare indeed. The Cuban Revolution, seen in this perspective, is only the third such movement in Latin America (or fourth, if in addition to Mexico and Bolivia one were to add Peron's Argentina).

If we follow the fidelistas' interpretation and preferred means of export, and define the Cuban Revolution as a successful guerrilla movement, the rarity of the phenomenon becomes all the more apparent. Of all the governmental changes produced in Latin America by non-constitutional means, it is difficult to recognize

any, including the Cuban one itself, which conform to the patterns developed in the writings of Che Guevara and other Cuban theorists. Not that violence is uncommon.

A recent compilation by the Department of State lists 106 changes of chief of state in Latin America between 1930 and 1965 by other than constitutional means. In the same period, there was a total of approximately 270 changes of chief of state throughout the region, which suggests that 40 percent of the changes involved successful oppositional violence. The qualification "oppositional" is used here in distinction to "official" violence, since the State Department list does not include cases of single candidate elections, continuismo or other successful use of force to ensure the continuation in office of a chief of state or his protege. Nor does the figure include cases where the functioning of the constitutional process has been obtained by a show of opposition force (e.g., a barracks uprising intended less to seize power than to demonstrate that all is not well among the military supporters of the regime).

As K. H. Silvert has put it, "If the normal way of rotating the executive in a given country is by revolution, and if there have been a hundred such changes in a century, then it is not being facecious to remark that revolutions are a sign of stability--that events are marching along as they always have."*

* The Conflict Society, Reaction and Revolution in Latin America, New Orleans, Hauser, 1961, p. 20.

The pattern of "normal" politics in most Latin American countries is determined by the interplay of the leadership elements of the political parties and organized labor, the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, the government bureaucracy, the military command, and the spokesmen for the large landowners and local and foreign investors. These groups have many important differences and conflicts: urban-rural, agrarian-industrial, national-foreign, lay-clerical, civil-military, and so on. One of the characteristics of these conflicts is that, although often fought in the name of first principles and sometimes accompanied by violence, they rarely have had immediate repercussions on the society as a whole and do not affect the structure of society. The leaders of a victorious "revolution" are absorbed into the system through public offices and private concessions. Issues with broad repercussions not subject to such "individual solutions" were left to be resolved by changed circumstances or to be raised anew by future aspirants to power. Traditional Latin American revolutions thus rarely led to striking policy changes: limited stakes were disputed among articulate minorities.

As previously passive mass elements began to acquire political consciousness after 1930, and particularly since World War II, the disturbing possibility of "social revolution," of radical change and displacement rather than evolution and assimilation, increasingly intruded into normal politics. The stakes of political action have become increasingly high, as questions affecting the

very nature of the economy and the society entered the political arena. The historical development of democratic institutions under leaders who were themselves either opposed to or highly doubtful about mass aspirations, and the traditional practice of violence to resolve limited issues, have limited the capacity of regularized democratic procedures to resolve the new issues, usually themselves raised in the name of "democracy."

This changing political situation, though it may help to explain the continuing presence of violence, does not appear to have markedly affected the incidence of violence affecting the tenure of chiefs of state. Since 1959, for example, 16 or 37 changes of chiefs of state (43 percent) have occurred by nonconstitutional means. As we have seen, this is a gross measure, and quite possibly not the most relevant one, but it suggests that violence remains a secular characteristic of the political game in Latin America, and does not appear to be increasing. This particular pattern, in fact, is depressingly stable. Like other generic factors often associated with revolution (such as racial tensions, economic underdevelopment, or weak and dictatorial governments), the prevalence of violence does not preclude a variety of quite different political situations, and is of limited utility in attempting to analyze the immediate causes and nature of revolutionary processes.

II. THE FRUSTRATED REVOLUTIONARY TRADITION

In this paper I will concentrate on some of the more explicitly political factors surrounding the development of revolutionary pressures in Latin America, and begin by considering the development of specific expectations and perspectives of action among certain Latin American revolutionaries in the period immediately preceding the Cuban Revolution.

The mid-1950s found the leading Nationalist Revolutionary parties of Latin America undergoing a profound crisis. In the wake of the democratic propaganda and expectations which had characterized the war effort to block Axis penetration in Latin America, the revolutionary parties which had issued from the depression but had until then been unable to take power, found themselves riding the crest of a wave of democratic experimentation.

Nowhere was this more in evidence than in Venezuela, with the rise to power of Romulo Betancourt and Accion Democratica, in Cuba, with the electoral triumph of Ramon Grau San Martin and the Cuban Revolutionary Party, and in Peru, where the founder for the APRA Party, Victor Raul Haya de la Torre, although not president, had had a determining voice in the selection of the man who was president. By the mid-1950s, all of these men were in exile. The Venezuelan and Peruvian coups of 1948 and the Cuban coup of 1952 were symptomatic of the collapse of the political expectations of the immediate post-war period.

In discussing the causes of the failure of the democratic experiments, it would seem, particularly to those of us in the United States, that the exiles should have given considerable attention to problems of internal organization and leadership, the analysis of specific local political conditions, and other problems which had prevented either the normal functioning of the now overthrown governments or their successful accomplishment of revolutionary programs. So bitter and personal were many of the initial recriminations, however, that relatively few persons engaged in serious discussion of the specific problems and failures of the postwar governments, preferring instead to heap invective on the governments, mainly military, which had inherited the disaster, and on the United States, gradually coming once again into focus as the source of all evil. To quote an eminent Venezuelan writing in November 1954,

Whatever the dominant beliefs in Washington concerning the nature of economic imperialism, in Latin America opinion is practically unanimous that this phenomenon is one of the primary causes, if not the primary source of such striking evils as the low standard of living of the masses and the resurgence and strength of despotic governments engendered by small privileged groups and based on the pretorianism of the so-called national armies. It is for this reason that attitudes toward imperialism are, among Latin Americans, the touchstone of political and moral positions and an unavoidable aspect of any discussion of political or social matters.*

* Gonzalo Barrios, "Seguridad Politica e Imperialismo en la America Latina," Humanismo, No. 25 (November 1954), p. 63.

Here was an issue on which all could unite: it was focused primarily on an external foreign enemy, and secondarily on the emotional denunciations of United States imperialism and the brutal military dictatorships it supported could serve to gratify the piques of leaders and perhaps provide slogans to build eventual popular support, but they bore little relation to the attainment of power or the development of new programs which might enable them to retain power once in it. Such appeals, in fact, concealed the gradual development of fundamental differences among Latin American radicals. That such differences were developing is clearly apparent in the just-cited article on "Political Security and Imperialism in Latin America" in a journal published by Cuban, Venezuelan and Guatemalan exiles in Mexico City.* The article was addressed to the question of the tactics required to deal with the influence of the United States in Latin America, and phrased the alternatives as follows:

Contemporary experience demonstrates that there are two paths of struggle open to subjugated peoples: to obtain the support of the power which is the enemy of

* Humanismo, which had been founded by a largely Mexican group in July 1952, had become regional in staff by August 1953, and after July 1954, became a virtual house organ for radical debate. Among its editors were the Cuban Raul Roa (later Fidel Castro's Foreign Minister), the Guatemalan Mario Monteforte Toledo (formerly Secretary-General of Arevalo's Partido Accion Revolucionaria), the Venezuelan Ildegar Perez Seguiní (later an Accion Democratica Senator), the Mexican Senator Luis I. Rodriguez (formerly Ambassador to Republican Spain), and the expatriate former Aprista poet, resident in Buenos Aires, Alberto Hidalgo.

the oppressing power, or to reach a political understanding with potentially similar forces within the oppressing nations.*

The debate over these alternatives was inevitably inconclusive, neither alternative seemed particularly practical. Those who favored turning to the Soviet Union for assistance ("the enemy of my enemy") had to consider the fact that, as the same article put it:

The Communist version of United States imperialism seems to accept the idea that Latin America is a politically secure zone (for the United States)...as may be judged by the fact that Communist propaganda and activities do not strike directly at the adversary, which they de facto repute invincible on his own grounds, and are rather limited to secondary maneuvers designed to support the Soviet cause as the center of opposition to the United States.**

How then, given this "error of geographic fatalism" (reinforced after the 1956 events in Hungary, as a result of which many argued that Eastern Europe and Latin America represented comparable mutually recognized spheres of influence) could the Soviet Union in fact be brought in as effective support for a new liberation movement? After all, when Bolivar had obtained British support, he had not needed to do any convincing. I And in any case, relations with the Soviet Union might

* Barrios, loc. cit.

** Idem. This is in some senses an extension of the arguments used by Haya against the Communists from the late 1920s on into the 1930s: the Communists are not to be trusted because they are not true revolutionaries.

involve complications, even if they could be obtained. On the other hand, it was almost as difficult to argue that the Democratic Party, the AFL-CIO, or American university students were reliable or potential allies for an anti-imperialist struggle. American labor and students, in spite of Norman Thomas, Serafino Romualdi and the United States National Student Association, simply looked neither very radical nor very powerful.*

Inconclusive as this debate was in the mid-1950s, the positions it revealed were matched by a serious element of generational conflict. The Generation of 1930, which was in the leadership position in the revolutionary parties whether this be APRA and Haya de la Torre in Peru, or Romulo Betancourt and Accion Democratica in Venezuela, or Grau and Prio and the Cuban Revolutionary Party, inclined strongly to the second solution--that of finding allies within the United States. Two experiences which dated from the '30s were very important in conditioning their views. They had seen the United States change what had seemed in their own early student days to be an extreme internally reactionary, imperialist posture. The Marines had been withdrawn in favor of a non-interventionist good neighbor policy, and Franklin Roosevelt

* Serafino Romualdi was the Inter-American representative of the AFL-CIO, and became heavily involved in Latin American labor affairs after the war. The National Student Association, with which the writer worked in 1955-57, became engaged in developing contacts among Latin American student federations in an attempt to offset growing post-Guatemala radicalization and offer a contrasting image of the United States, which might strengthen the hand of the more liberal currents in the debate. Both are used here to symbolize the weakness of these efforts.

had replaced Hoover. They felt that the United States was amenable to changes, that within the American tradition there were elements upon which they could rely. Conversely, their experiences with the Soviet Union in the prewar period did not predispose them to optimism. Many of them had travelled to the Soviet Union, only to find that the Soviet Union was in many ways more backward than their own countries, and that there was no significant awareness or disinterested sympathy for Latin America. For these if for no other reasons, the Soviet Union was not a place to turn for assistance to carry out Latin American revolutions.

Foreign policy, however, was not the only question at issue: what were the internal policies and programs to be followed? The Generation of 1930 had put its faith in moderation in the early post-war years and had gotten nowhere. A counter-thesis was well formulated in 1953, appropriately enough by a Bolivian:

The inevitable law of every future event in our rebellious and tumultuous America is as follows: any revolution which cuts itself off from the common man, any revolution which permits monopoly and privilege to exist will ultimately destroy itself. Agrarian reform and control of production for the collective good are thus the foundation stones of all national constructions.*

* Fernando Diez de Medina, "Los dos grandes temas de las revoluciones americanas," Humanismo, No. 13 (August 1953), p. 31. Diez de Medina, the leading ideologist of the early phase of the Bolivian revolution, then leaves no doubt as to the essential neutralism of

This, of course, is just what Haya had meant in 1924 when he made "nationalization of land and industry" a cornerstone of the original aprista program. But was it right? The Generation of 1930 had had too many experiences with the "common man" and with efforts to implement such a program to think that now, Bolivia notwithstanding, such a "return to the beginnings" was likely to contain the magic answer sought all these years.

his approach to foreign policy: "We have taken all that was useful from the civilization of the United States and the experience of Russia." (p. 37)

III. THE CRISIS IN APRA

The debate over the state of revolutionary politics hit the leading pre-war revolutionary party, APRA, at a particularly difficult moment. The 1945-48 period, with its final debacle, had left many scars, only some of which were visible at the time. For the first time, however, serious questions were raised concerning Haya de la Torre's leadership, and while there was a moratorium on much of the discussion involving Haya because of his continued "imprisonment" in the Colombian Embassy.*

That the crisis affected the very highest leadership and the ideology and program of the party is demonstrated by the contents of a secret letter addressed to Haya de la Torre in Mexico shortly after his release from the Colombian Embassy, and which asked Haya, in the name of the remaining Aprista leadership, to submit himself to party discipline and lead the party back to its former revolutionary position.**

* Haya de la Torre had sought political asylum in the Colombian Embassy in Lima in January 1949. Contrary to all Latin American tradition, however, the Odría government refused him safe conduct to leave the country, and Haya was not released until April 1954, after his stay had provided material for the most celebrated Latin American case on asylum.

** The letter was signed by Manuel Seoane, APRA's most popular and important leader after Haya, acting in his capacity as Secretary-General of the Coordinating Committee of Exiled Apristas, and by Luis Barrios Llona, Foreign Secretary (Barrios has since retired from politics, and claims to have a manuscript which he refrains from publishing out of respect for his wife, a cousin of Haya's). It is dated 11 June 1954 in Santiago de Chile.

The contents of the letter were so frank and went so directly to the core of the internal party differences that

The immediate cause of this effort to call to order the founder and until then virtually unquestioned leader of APRA was an article Haya wrote for Life magazine after his release.* The article is a folksy account clearly written for an American audience, and largely devoted to the banalities of five years of existence cooped up in the Colombian Embassy. A few passages touched on politics, however, and these provoked the storm. In an evident effort to appeal to American opinion, Haya wrote, for example: "I believe that democracy and capitalism offer the surest solution to world problems even though capitalism still has its faults." When this and other comments reaffirming APRA's anticommunism, and its policy of "inter-American democracy without empire" (but without any concrete references), were published in Life en Espanol and distributed throughout Latin America, and the Aprista leaders' letters of inquiry to Haya requesting an explanation or rectification of such "patent journalistic errors" went unanswered, the APRA Executive Committee in Exile resolved to act. In its letter to Haya, it pointed out "anyone reading the phrase (on capitalism

only twelve copies were made and sent by messengers under conditions of great secrecy. Victor Villaneuva, who was not without his friends, managed to obtain a copy and publish it as Appendix 6 of his Tragedia de un Pueblo y un Partido (pp. 227-257 of the 2nd edition, Lima, 1956) because even though the document criticized the Callao uprising, its writers accepted Aprista responsibility, blaming the revolt on the development of an "involuntary and subtle, but real, gulf between the masses and the leadership" (Ibid., p. 229) and otherwise supported Villaneuva's account, which was being publicly disowned. (Information in this paragraph is from discussions with Villaneuva in Lima during 1964).

*"My Five Year Exile in My Own Country," Life, Volume XXXVI, No. 18 (May 3, 1954), pp. 152-156.

cited above) as it appears in print can only conclude that Aprismo is a liberal democratic party which supports minor social reforms."*

On the problem of anticommunism, the letter reviews APRA's "fundamental differences" with both local communism and the Soviet Union, which "arise from Indo-American reality and its national interests," but notes that these "cannot and must not be confused with the anticommunism of the reactionary groups who oppose all social reforms, nor with the anti-Sovietism of empires competing with Russia for world domination."** The letter concludes on this point:

Therefore, the respective positions vis-a-vis Communism and the Soviet Union, although both hostile, have antagonistic origins and purposes, which must be continually underscored and explained, energetically preventing the confusionist actions of those who favor converting the Party's opposition to communism and the Soviet Union into a means of currying favor and reaching understandings with the reactionary forces of imperialism.***

The use of anticommunism as a means of "currying favor," that is, of gaining support in the United States, and of neutralizing conservative internal and foreign opponents,

* Ibid., p. 253. Emphasis in the original. In view of APRA's historic anticapitalist position ("which you have so well expressed in works like El Antiimperialismo y el APRA") the letter continues, "the question arises whether you are perhaps bound by some temporary commitment which limits your public activities."

** Ibid., p. 241.

*** Idem.

was precisely what Haya had in mind. With the writers of the letter, he believed ideally in the formula "neither Washington nor Moscow," but unlike the writers, he believed it necessary to choose, albeit perhaps only temporarily, and in that light he could only choose Washington.

The letter devotes an extensive treatment to the question of the position of the party vis-à-vis the United States, and recaps the evolution of APRA's position up to its policy statement of 1947 which noted that "the radical change given to the relations between the United States and Indo-America by the new policies of President Roosevelt were the basis of a firm and progressive orientation during the war" and concluded that APRA supported the Good Neighbor Policy. But, the letter continued:

Circumstances have once again changed. The "new policies" of President Roosevelt have been replaced by the "old policies" of imperialism, sponsored and supported by the Republicans.... Monopolist interests dominate the White House. In these very days, the United Fruit Company, affected by the Guatemalan agrarian reform, and by Honduran labor demands, is mobilizing its influence to push the government in Washington to provoke an intervention or a fratricidal war to crush our sister popular revolution in Guatemala. It is impossible to speak of democratic inter-Americanism as of a distant dream when reality indicates that imperialism is at its height, when American jet planes fly over Central America bearing arms to assist the repulsive petty tyrants of Nicaragua and Honduras. No, companero jefe, let us not avoid with plans for the future the irrevocable demands of a present which requires a frank and combative posture, at the cost of losing the party's position of continental leadership.*

*Ibid., p. 236. Emphasis in the original.

Faced with these signs of incipient rebellion within APRA, Haya met with the dissidents in a meeting in Montevideo, whose results were kept secret, then left for Europe and Scandinavia. Other members of the Generation of 1930, however, put themselves on record, and their views were similar to what could be read into Haya's actions. Vicente Saenz, the Costa Rican whose thirty years of permanent political opposition and refusal to compromise his criticism of the United States had made him Central America's leading polemical anti-imperialist, found time to interrupt his writing and publication of Guatemalan propaganda long enough to comment unhappily that,

The moderate gains of the movement of October--much less radical than the definitive conquests of the Mexican revolution--could have been defended with local polemical formulations...and had it been necessary to resist anglo-saxon Cold War hysteria, to use other languages, then use that of the papal encyclicals...of the ILO...of the UN...or even of the "New Deal"...Truman.*

One former Guatemalan Minister (of Finance, under Arevalo) who did not follow the lead of Arevalo and his fellow ex-Ministers in rushing into print to express their solidarity with Arbenz, agreed with Saenz:

A people's freedom is compromised more by gestures of useless rebellion than by the subtleties of a statesman, which in appearance resemble surrenders. A small country must not strut like a drunken mouse defying the cat.**

* Vicente Saenz, letter to Ildegar Perez-Seguini, dated July 29, 1955, printed in Humanismo, No. 31-32 (July-August 1955) pp. 88-90, citation at 88-89.

** Clemente Marroquin Rojas, op. cit., p. 9.

To these counsels of ideological retreat and avoidance of the issues of the Cold War, Romulo Betancourt added a word of hope about potential changes in the United States policy when he wrote in 1956:

The prolonged nature of the struggle between the two world camps, the West and the East, and the generalized belief that a Third World War is less likely with every passing day, will in the long run remove one of the most solid external props of the Latin American dictatorships and despotisms. In an international climate in which the military Chiefs of Staff will no longer influence as greatly the formulation of the foreign policy of the western powers, it would seem the reasonable to expect the conflict between the United States and Russia to shift progressively towards spheres other than competition in armaments. The controversy will turn more on issues of doctrine and principles, and in such an ideological competition, the Soviets will have a solid arsenal of arguments if the governments of the Western camp continue to publish the speeches of Khrushchev to prove that Stalin was a leader of criminal conduct, and at the same time continue to offer assistance and support to Latin American governments with repressive traits similar to those of the Stalin regime. This basic error in the conduct of foreign policy of their country is the object of repeated criticism by important groups within the United States, led by the powerful unified labor movement, and by periodicals and individuals with much influence on public opinion. It is highly likely that such criticism will lead, in a more or less short space of time, to a shift in United States foreign policy.*

At the same time that Betancourt wrote these words, Haya de la Torre authorized from Rome a pact which pledged

*Romulo Betancourt, Politica y Petroleo, Mexico, 1956, pp. 773-774.

APRA electoral support to Manuel Prado, the man who had kept APRA outlawed during his previous presidency, from 1939-1945. In return, APRA would be allowed to organize freely to prepare for the 1962 elections, six years in the future. Haya had won his internal struggle.*

The mid-nineteen-fifties thus found the Generation of 1930, superior in its greater age and experience, using the old anti-imperialist and antidictatorial litany as a convenient tool of opposition politics, while simultaneously moderating their programs and aspirations in the hope of attaining power in their lifetimes.

*But his party critics turned out to have been largely right. APRA lost its position of Latin American leadership. By the time the United States, under a new Democratic president, once again adopted a "new policy" and rediscovered the "democratic left," revolutionary leadership in Latin America had passed from the Generation of 1930 and aprismo to the Generation of 1950 and fidelismo. And in Peru itself, a weakened APRA participated in two national elections, losing ultimately to another upstart, Fernando Belaunde Terry, young enough to be Haya's son.

IV. THE NEW RADICALISM

These pragmatic responses of the Generation of 1930 were not shared by their younger followers among those who had graduated from the universities in the post-war period. The Generation of 1950 had neither the experiences of Soviet unsuitability nor of United States acceptance of reforms like the Mexican oil expropriation. To them, the main problem of the times could be identified as imperialism and the solution, as it had once been for the Generation of 1930, was revolution.

Since the original revolutionary formulations had never been formally discarded, they provided a roof under which temporarily coexisted two groups speaking similar language, one become essentially liberal and the other rapidly becoming Leninist.

The process began with the reformulation of the problem of imperialism along the lines which Haya had developed in the 1920's, and which had typified the thinking of the Generation of 1930 prior to the coming of the New Deal and the Good Neighbor Policy. Whereas Haya had ultimately resolved the issue along reformist lines à la Kautsky, the intervention in Guatemala provided the basis for a new interpretation along Marxist-Leninist lines. Unlike Haya, who had in effect proclaimed that imperialism was a policy, and one which could be changed or reversed, as had happened with the Good Neighbor Policy, the new generation redefined the Good Neighbor Policy as a policy of imperialism. Thus, a young Aprista, writing in early 1955, in a book whose prologue was written by Arevalo,

defined the Good Neighbor Policy as "a change in the forms of United States policy to avoid (Latin American) susceptibilities but in no way affecting fundamental problems."* The Good Neighbor Policy had therefore been a tactic designed to deceive Latin Americans, and which had ultimately resulted in greater imperialist penetration. Those who were taken in by this tactic had been unprepared for "Operation Guatemala," and had refused to face reality. This reality was that the United States had accepted the Mexican land reform and oil expropriation only

* Ezequiel Ramirez Novoa, La Farsa del panamericanismo y la unidad indoamericana, Editorial Indoamerica, Buenos Aires, 1955, p. 47. Ramirez Novoa's book is interesting in its own right as a review of the interamerican system by a young member of the Generation of 1950. Ramirez, however, also has an interesting personal history. Secretary-General of APRA university youth, he also was President of the National Student Federation of Peru (FEP) in the early 1950's. As a young lawyer in exile, he met Juan Jose Arevalo in Montevideo in the early days of June 1954 when Arevalo was attempting to rally Uruguayan opinion behind Arbenz. His book cited above is an excellent example of the process of radicalization which took place within the non-Communist left as a result of Guatemala, and which remained initially unperceived by most observers because its exponents were youthful members of the increasingly liberal traditional parties. In July 1959, after the APRA National Plenary refused to adopt a fidelista program, Ramirez and several other youth leaders walked out, forming initially the "28th of July Movement" (after Peru's national independence date), then the APRA Rebelde (which at one stage in 1960 virtually coincided with APRA Youth), and then, finally, the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), which was virtually wiped out when it engaged in guerrilla activities in 1965. Cf. Ezequiel Ramirez Novoa, El proceso de una gran epopeya: La revolucion Cubana y el Imperialismo Yanqui, Editorial "28 de Julio," Lima, 1960.

because of the need to maintain hemispheric unity in the face of a coming Second World War. Even so,

If Mexico had not paid (compensation), General Enriquez would have been provided with arms and frontiers to overthrow Avila Camacho, just as these had been made available to Madero against Porfirio Diaz, to Pascual Orozco and Huerta against Madero, to Carranza against Huerta, to Villa against Carranza, etc.*

Not only did Guatemala teach, therefore,

that the popular and nationalist struggles for the integral independence of our countries must face this aggressive and imperialist policy which has come once again to dominate the United States, and which is supported by the continental satraps who prosper in its shade**

but a "correct" analysis of United States relations with Latin America taught that this was inevitable, that the policy was not a policy but a tactic, and that any movement which affected imperialist interests would necessarily face United States hostility as had Guatemala.

Interestingly, it was again the younger and the more radical exiles who objected to such complete concentration on the United States:

To pretend to sum up everything in imperialism, or in an even more precarious analysis, in the Republican Party of the

* Clemente Marroquin Rojas, op. cit., p. 15.

** Toriello, op. cit., p. 204.

United States, demonstrates lack of political sense and bourgeois conformism...insufficient even if illuminated by a fervent nationalism.... To create hopes overlooking the essence of imperialism is...also to fail to accept our own internal contradictions, to avoid the class struggle, nationally as well as internationally, in its multiple implications, to locate oneself on metaphysical grounds.*

We have already identified, fully, the forces of aggression. We can identify their behavior, their instruments, their strategy. We must now examine, critically, the forces responsible for the defense.**

To the small groups of exiles in Mexico and elsewhere, this was really the fundamental question, since it focussed directly on the problem of power. More important yet, it raised the question of the uses and retention of power. The Generation of 1930 had already given its answer: power was difficult to attain, and once attained, it should not be squandered by needless provocations of the United States. Implicit in this view was the abandonment of earlier revolutionary dreams.*** For the Generation of 1950, full of revolutionary zeal, whose attitudes were akin to the optimistic revolutionary voluntarism of the Marx of 1848, the problem was not how to attain power--that would

* Luis Cardoza y Aragon, La Revolucion Guatemalteca, op. cit., p. 154.

** Letter to Ildegar Perez-Sanguini, dated June 10, 1955, reprinted in Humanismo, Nos. 31-32 (July-August 1955), pp. 67-70, citation at p. 69.

*** Though usually without the candor of the Peruvian member of the Generation of 1930 who confided to the writer in 1964 that, looking back, he was rather relieved that he and his fellow activists within APRA had failed to seize power in 1948.

come easily enough; nor even what to do with it--that, too, was easy, for what popular revolution could do other than remove the sources of exploitation by "nationalizing the lands and mines" (as Haya had put it in 1924) and giving the popular majorities of peasants and workers a chance to develop freely; the problem was rather how to keep power and ensure the carrying through of the revolution.

When the time had come for the confrontation with the invading forces, Arbenz had fled. To the extent that the Generation of 1930 commented on this, either Arbenz should have stayed and fought, or he had no choice but to yield to superior power.* To urge staying and fighting was romantic, but yielded no light on policies to be followed to ensure a successful outcome to the struggle. To suggest the inevitability of the triumph of imperialism through superior power was to preclude the existence of such policies and to assume a defeatist position. The key was found in Toriello:

* See for the most complete and explicit debate on Guatemala, Ildegar Perez-Seguini, "Lo inexplicado en el Caso Guatemala," Humanismo, No. 29 (March 1955), pp. 31-44, in which the young author refuses to accept the silence generally maintained on certain key unexplained questions, including Arbenz' resignation, and invites debate. The responses, which are reprinted with commentary in "Debate Sobre lo Inexplicado in el Caso Guatemala," Humanismo, Nos. 31-32 (July-August 1955), pp. 60-94, constitute a fascinating and extremely important source for the thinking of the period. The members of the Generation of 1930 generally limited themselves to comments on points other than the internal problems within the revolutionary family; Arevalo actually writes rather pointedly that he expects Perez-Seguini (a Venezuelan) will now open a second debate on "the unexplained in the Venezuelan case." (Letter of July 19, 1955, at p. 92).

The betrayal by a few high chiefs of the Guatemalan army, which had been sought for a long time, apparently unsuccessfully, in the halls of the American Embassy, came to give the United States at the last minute the unexpected card of triumph for the UFCO-Department of State-CIA consortium. Thanks to them Peurifoy rescued Castillo Armas from disaster.*

Confident of his support in the Army, Colonel Arbenz had left the Army untouched, and it had remained like a Trojan horse within the revolution, ready to destroy it. Every one of the post-war governments, in fact, had fallen to a military coup, and as we have seen, anti-militarism was linked to the revival of anti-imperialism. Out of the Guatemalan affair, however, came a new formulation: the problem was less one of the evils of military dictatorship, than it was of the potentially counterrevolutionary nature of the military, now seen as not only an obstacle to the seizure of power, but also to the carrying out of the revolutionary program. That this was indeed a key was further indicated by the Bolivian revolution, which had crushed the traditional army and initially replaced it with peasant and workers militias under the control of the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement.

The great triumph of the Bolivian revolution does not consist merely in the fact that it is distributing the land--with an intensity and pace unknown and undreamed of in Guatemala--or that it has nationalized the tin mines, but that it has built the two interrelated weapons of revolution: a party and an army.**

*Toriello, op. cit., p. 183.

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V. THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF REVOLUTION

The seizure of power in Cuba by the radicalized younger generation, together with the fact that the leadership of the revolution devolved onto a man who is undoubtedly one of the most gifted leaders in terms of communicative capacity that Latin America has ever seen, and the immediate ideological and political controversy that this event aroused, brought the latent schism between the Generation of 1950 and that of 1930 to a head. Throughout Latin America, the Generation of 1950 rejected the leadership of the Generation of 1930. In Peru, Venezuela, and Colombia, guerrilla warfare was undertaken not by the old Moscow Communist Parties, but by former followers of Haya, Betancourt and Gaitan. The net result, however, has been not only the proliferation of new Marxist-Communist movements of varying significance, but to lead the non-Cuban fidelistas and other radicalized nationalists to political and occasionally physical decimation.

The reformulation of revolutionary nationalism in Marxist terms was both accelerated and limited by the coming of the Cuban Revolution after 1 January 1959. Accelerated, because the gradual radicalization of the post-war years was sharpened and completed by a conversion to Marxism-Leninism of the Cuban revolutionary elite once it was in power. Limited, because although it is possible to bridge the gap between nationalism and Marxism in theory and in opposition, a reconciliation between nationalism and Communism in power is in practice extremely

difficult, and virtually impossible to communicate to even sympathetic outside observers. Furthermore, once a revolution has begun, it is very different from the optimistic vision of the coming utopia. The realization that revolution is not a "promenade under the palms" is a good setting for pale romantics and "it could have been done better" recriminations, but not for further revolutions.

The political context, in other words, of efforts since 1961 to emulate or extend the Cuban Revolution has been very different from the context of 1957-1961 during which the Revolution took place. Some of the changes, as would be expected, are due to factors which have nothing to do with the Cuban Revolution itself. To a surprising extent, however, one is tempted to say that the Cuban Revolution will not be repeated because it has already happened, in the sense that the events surrounding the Cuban Revolution have been such as to radically alter not only relations among revolutionary political groups, but also political conditions at national, regional and international levels, and that these new conditions are eminently unfavorable to the development of further radical social revolutions at this time.

These effects are most evident at the level of relations among revolutionary groups. The radicalization of the Cuban Revolutionary leadership was hidden not just because Castro attempted to hide it, realizing that, as Marti put it, "there are things which must be hidden if they are to be obtained" (itself a commentary of what might have happened even under the favorable 1957-1961

conditions if the radicalization had been known), but because the split between the two generations of revolutionaries was still hidden, and the younger revolutionaries were shielded by the verbal radicalism, oppositionist policies and organizational structure of the old revolutionary parties. The course of the Cuban Revolution has removed this prop, just as it has in roughly parallel fashion destroyed the possibility of support from liberal opinion in the United States. Herbert Matthews will not interview the Guatemala guerrillas. Furthermore, the older revolutionary politicians, who were in a defensive role during the mid and late 1950s, forced to counsel patience and the need to obtain United States support, were enabled to take a more offensive stance after 1961, as a result both of the increasing communization of Cuba and of the Alliance for Progress, which gave astute and vigorous politicians like Romulo Betancourt the opportunity to hold the support of groups who otherwise would have been more vulnerable to the fidelista line.

The fall of Batista on 1 January 1959 came as the culmination of a period interpreted by many as the twilight of the tyrants and the affirmation of democracy in Latin America. The fall of Peron in 1955, the withdrawal of General Odria of Peru, and the assassination of President Somoza in 1956, the overthrow of Rojas Pinilla in Colombia in 1957, and of Perez Jimenez in Venezuela in 1958, all seemed to augur a renewed period of democratic experimentation in Latin America. Everyone's heart seemed on the left; dictatorships were out of style. It was in this atmosphere that large numbers

of Cuba's upper and middle classes turned against Batista (assisted, it must be noted, by Batista's tendency to include "decent people" in the "torturable" class), and that the younger officers, headed by Colonel Ramon Barquin refused to support a military junta against both Batista and Castro, but placed the regular army at the disposal of the triumphant Castro. Class and institutional survival, having once seen the course of the Cuban revolution, make similar developments virtually out of the question. Few looked for a "safe" democratic alternative to Castro in Cuba, first because safety seemed less of a factor, and secondly, because Castro seemed a democrat. No post-Cuba fidelista is likely to find a similar reception.

A final aspect of the internal Latin American context concerns the existence of misunderstandings on the part of the fidelistas themselves, as to why they came to power and held it. The tendency to universalize and attempt to repeat under changed circumstances a successful experience makes it rather difficult, particularly from a committed political position, to take into account changing conditions. The guerrilla warfare which was so much a part of the revolutionary experience of Castro and Guevara was only a part of the Cuban insurrection. This does not in itself mean, of course, that Guevara's theory is wrong, but only that it represents a partial abstraction from the Cuban revolutionary process, and as such needs to be tested. The experience of Haya's nephew, Luis de la Puente Uceda, a young radicalized Aprista who was with Guevara in Mexico

in 1954, and who attempted to start a guerrilla movement in Peru last year, after training in Cuba and following the Guevara pattern minutely, only to be killed with most of his followers, suggests that the guerrilla warfare approach to revolution is either an incorrect abstraction from the Cuban model, or that its very enunciation has helped change conditions unfavorably.

The international situation has also changed appreciably. Mention has already been made of the Alliance for Progress. Even the most negatively inclined Latin American critics would have difficulty in denying that the Alliance represents 1) tangible proof of United States concern where previously there had been neglect and 2) an incentive for not following the Cuban example. Castro has occasionally complained that Latin America has profited because the United States has learned from his movement; in doing so, he is implicitly recognizing the historical roots and limits of the fidelista phenomenon.

The Missile Crisis of 1962 and the Dominican intervention of 1965 have also clarified the continued existence of U.S. power. Immediately after the Bay of Pigs, there were many who failed to realize that the acceptance of defeat by President Kennedy stemmed less from lack of power than from moral and political self-constraint.

The major changes in the international context, however, are related to the realization of the non-existence of the Third World as an effective political force and, most importantly, to the decline in the potential ability of the Soviet Union as an ally against the United States. This is partly due to the passing of the exaggerated

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prestige of the Soviet Union in the period of Sputnik, the missile gap, and rapid industrialization, and partly due to the establishment of clear limits on Soviet power following the missile crisis. But it has also largely been due to the strength of nationalism in Latin America, and particularly among the more radicalized elements who would earlier have been confident fidelistas.

Nationalism in Latin America almost inevitably is revolutionary and Marxist in mood. The nationalist believes in the necessity of developing a strong nation in which the Indian and other classless elements will be integrated. There is almost a Rousseauian sense in which the traditional ruling classes have been separated from and alienated from "the people" who make up the real nation. In the age of imperialism, the essence of nationalism lies in revolution against the imperialist and his local lackeys, the traditional ruling classes. Depending on the situation, there will probably be room for the participation in the struggle of the "native" or "national" bourgeoisie.

This situation changes sharply if national Marxism becomes linked to external Marxism, that is to say, develops a close relationship with one of the major Communist powers (such a development which, while not necessary, is likely both because of ideological affinity and practical politics). Some Latin American Marxists envisage a form of neutralism at the level of world politics, a hope that, to use Arevalo's imagery, the small sardines can find room between the sharks to swim safely. In practice, if a sardine is being closely

by one shark, it is likely to seek safety by swimming in the wake of another shark. The Cubans believed that the United States was so bound by its own economic interests that it would be "impossible to liquidate the Cuban sugar quota" as Guevara wrote only a few months before the United States did so, and that Cuba thus had an economically based guarantee of independence from the Soviet Union, even while seeking its support. After this was eliminated, they may have trusted first a reverse form of "geographic determinism" (their distance from the Soviet Union) and then on revolution in Latin America (or at least Venezuela) to give them a continental base which would enable them to move out of the Soviet wake. But none of this has materialized, and although Castro did trade personal political control (the elimination of an independent Cuban Communist party) for his declaration of Marxist-Leninist allegiance, Cuba remains now and for the foreseeable future tied to the Soviet Union. And this is clearly contrary to Latin American nationalism; even, as the missile crisis plainly indicated, to Cuban nationalism.

Castro and his revolution have survived these difficulties, and will probably continue so long as Cuban nationalism has no clear alternative. The Generation of 1950 in the rest of Latin America, however, will retain revolutionary unity even less than did that of 1930. Not only is it finding revolutionary paths to power blocked, but it is being subjected to a fragmentation born out of the sudden lack of definition of nationalism (whom will it serve: itself, Latin America,

Cuba which retains a claim for its support, the Soviet Union, China...?), and the emergence of possible new formulations (like radical Christian Socialism) which seek to reconcile primitive Marxism, nationalism and revolution with opposition to Communist as well as Yankee imperialism.